



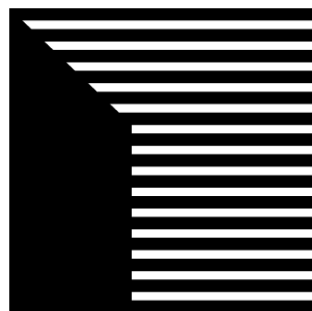
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CURBATHERI

**Curating sustainable urban transformations
through heritage**

**Deep Cities-CURBATHERI project Policy Brief:
Integrating values-based approaches into
heritage management**

DELIVERABLE D5.6.



DEEP CITIES

Curating sustainable urban transformations
through heritage



DOCUMENT CONTROL

| Version | Status | Date |
|----------------|---|------------------|
| 1.0. | First draft of deliverable | 25 October 2022 |
| 1.1. | Partner review and additional contributions | 4 November 2022 |
| 1.2. | Updated version | 17 November 2022 |
| 1.3. | Partner review and additional contributions | |



Content

| | |
|---|---|
| Deep Cities-CURBATHERI project Policy Brief: Integrating values-based approaches into heritage management | 5 |
| Executive summary | 5 |
| Introduction: which heritage-led regeneration challenges are we facing for sustainable urban development? | 5 |
| The specific problems..... | 6 |
| -Fragmentation in heritage preservation facades:..... | 6 |
| -Privatization of heritage areas | 6 |
| -Legal obstacles in the processes to protect tangible and intangible heritage..... | 6 |
| -Finding effective methods for understanding complex and dynamic heritage values | 6 |
| -Difficulties in recognizing stakeholder expectations | 7 |
| -People are not confident about engaging with participatory processes..... | 7 |
| -Small scale initiatives coordinated by different parties..... | 7 |
| Recommendations | 7 |
| Recommendation 1. Stimulate the provision of interdisciplinary training of heritage managers for a holistic approach to heritage management:..... | 7 |
| Recommendation 2. Use people-centred methods to understand the complex social values associated with deep cities | 7 |
| Recommendation 3. Stakeholders' involvement through evaluating programmes:..... | 8 |
| Recommendation 4. Collaborate within the government to regulate legislation to avoid speculation: | 8 |
| Recommendation 5. Be supportive of community tactics for the preservation of heritage:..... | 8 |
| Recommendation 6. Reviewing agency strategies in bottom-up community processes: | 8 |
| Research Parameters | 9 |



Deep Cities-CURBATHERI project Policy Brief: Integrating values-based approaches into heritage management

Executive summary

In this policy brief, we present a series of recommendations for configuring values-based approaches to sustainable heritage conservation strategies, based on our understanding of how historical urban transformations could be a source of inclusive discourses and narratives within what has been called the *Deep Cities*. We advocate the application of methods for understanding the values people attach to heritage places. We also promote multi-stakeholder dialogue to enable decision makers to better understand stakeholder expectations regarding transformation of the multifaceted *deep history* of a place. This proposal intends to integrate the analysis of urban transformations through mapping different values and intersectional voices to contribute to boosting social sustainability actions. The *Deep Cities* approach for historical urban areas implies a diversity of values which may be in conflict. For several months, we have tried to demonstrate with empirical research the operationalization of a plural vision of heritage for the design of desirable and sustainable cities. The objective was to develop a series of tools that enabled reflexive and deliberative management processes in the meantime that enhanced social inclusion through strategies of knowledge co-production and the discovery of shared values associated with a temporary and physically fragmented heritage. The main objective of this policy brief is to make several recommendations to heritage managers including policymakers, heritage officers, and planners, at national, sub-national and local levels of government.

Introduction: which heritage-led regeneration challenges are we facing for sustainable urban development?

Heritage-led regeneration refers to initiatives in which the driver for urban renewal processes is heritage conservation. Within the conservation process, heritage constitutes an inherent dynamic and transformative urban element. However, fragmented heritage structures, targeted by urban strategies, often lose the opportunity to offer urban planning a sustainable source for cultural values, as these pose difficulties for practitioners and users to agree on what is to be protected. A *Deep Cities* approach for historical urban areas implies a diversity of values which may be in conflict. To address this challenge, CURBATHERI-Deep Cities proposes an approach in which historical transformation is a value that can be mobilised to achieve sustainable urban solutions.

Broadly speaking, a sustainable city can be defined as a *liveable city*, and through heritage conservation, we may support a stronger sense of identity and sense of belonging, which could play a key role in the mitigation of social inequalities, and the creation of safe environments that could increase the quality of life. In CURBATHERI-Deep Cities, we argue that by deconstructing the multiple and complex (and often contested) values attributed to an area or place, we may be able to identify some of the critical factors that contribute, or not, to socially sustainable regeneration. For this reason, the policy briefs aim to accurately present the



principal problems that policy is facing as well as propose a solution to these problems by providing clear recommendations to heritage managers.

The specific problems

-Fragmentation in heritage preservation facades:

Rapid urban development and the lack of long-term planning decisions can result in fragmentation of urban heritage -tangible and intangible-, making them hard to identify and access to its different layers of use and history/stories. Facades and historic conservation area designations tend to privilege aesthetic coherence relating to particular styles/periods - rather than the complex layers of the deep city - creating a kind of fragmentation and fossilisation of discrete areas. In these contexts, resident communities may be marginalised from the processes of urban transformation and the values associated with place could be more difficult to identify from an integrated and holistic approach towards the increased importance of heritage in today's society.

-Privatization of heritage areas

Adaptive heritage reuse can easily facilitate gentrification processes, commodification, and the exclusion of groups of people. Contested values and tensions surrounding change are often related to increased privatisation of urban space or constraints on communal practices and relations, alongside the loss of historic features and places associated with public discourses, individual and social memory, and lived experience. This could be problematic and lead to the generation of feelings of displacement and exclusion, as well as to the loss of a variety of stories around heritage in a multi-vocal way.

-Legal obstacles in the processes to protect tangible and intangible heritage

Heritage-led regeneration may be hampered by existing heritage legislation, but it may also be the only reason for a heritage asset to survive. Urban regeneration operations may be subject to lengthy, complex and time-consuming licenses processes, which need permits, requiring approvals from building, planning and local heritage departments. This is often a combination of lack of resources and staff, non-integrated procedures and policies, and key decisions being made at different levels and/or by different organisations.

-Finding effective methods for understanding complex and dynamic heritage values

A values-based approach to heritage can play an active role in bringing about positive change within urban environments. To ensure that this can happen in socially sustainable ways, it is necessary to understand diverse contemporary values attached to the deep city by different constituencies making up their, often complex, social fabric. Currently, routine heritage management and urban planning processes tend to rely on consultation processes, which fail to capture the complexity and diversity of meanings, identities, memories, stories and place attachments generated by deep cities in face to face and online interactions.



-Difficulties in recognizing stakeholder expectations

To recognise stakeholder expectations is a complex operation. Projects that are implemented without taking into account the expectations of individual citizens and communities, rarely achieve sustainable results in the long term due. This is why it is necessary to involve stakeholders' expectations in heritage management.

-People are not confident about engaging with participatory processes

Lengthy planning consultations may result in participation fatigue (particularly among formal but often voluntary community organisations). While people demonstrate a desire to input into a future decision making about heritage driven urban transformation, they are skeptical about whether their priorities and values will influence outcomes.

-Small scale initiatives coordinated by different parties

Heritage-led regeneration is often marked by small-scale initiatives coordinated by different parties of local government. The lack of a coordinated vision across the full scale of the area make it very problematic to respond to the local dynamics and necessities.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis presented so far, a series of recommendations are provided below aimed at a range of policymakers at European, national, regional, and local levels.

Recommendation 1. Stimulate the provision of interdisciplinary training of heritage managers for a holistic approach to heritage management

The complexity of the relationships between urban heritage, its diverse values and the multiple stakeholders interested in it means that it is challenging to acquire a holistic approach to the role which plays the uses of heritage in the sustainable preservation of urban transformations. Because of this challenge, stimulating the provision of training for heritage manager is important. A diversity of events including training days and workshops should be organised so that policymakers to understand heritage from a holistic point of view.

Recommendation 2. Use people-centred methods to understand the complex social values associated with deep cities

It is important that people-centred social and digital research methods are deployed to understand the complex and often contested values associated with deep cities and take these into account in decision-making. A combination of qualitative social and semi-quantitative digital methods are recommended to capture the production and negotiation of diverse values associated with the deep city through both face-to-face interaction and various online digital/social media platforms. These should be embedded in routine urban planning and



heritage management processes in order to support socially sustainable urban transformations.

Recommendation 3. Stakeholders' involvement through evaluating programmes

The participation of the whole range of stakeholders in evaluation programmes for monitoring the project is recommended from the early stages of the project. Evaluations should be conceived as a process to improve projects in the short and long term, allowing room for rectification and reformulation of strategies. It also allows stakeholders to contribute to implementing improvement strategies, especially in dialogue between society and expert actors as well as to the improvement of the heritage policies themselves. For this to take place it is essential to allocate funding for the design and implementation of partial and final evaluation dynamics for heritage conservation projects.

Recommendation 4. Collaborate within the government to regulate legislation to avoid speculation

Heritage-led regeneration is strategic in promoting sustainable urban development, but it can also exacerbate speculation and gentrification processes. By establishing defined guidelines for land economic value, property taxes, business rates, and other levies, regulatory frameworks can be used to govern the process of urban renewal, reducing its susceptibility to gentrification and speculation. When there is trust and collaboration among the various involved planning and heritage departments, as well as a proportionate partnership between public and private sector interests, decision-making will be easier. It is also important to have financial and legal tools for limiting possibilities for urban speculation. These tools can facilitate handing over ownership to non-commercial management initiatives such as cooperatives and other analogic figures.

Recommendation 5. Be supportive of community tactics for the preservation of heritage

Institutional support for community-based management tactics that contribute to the goal of heritage preservation is relevant. Community, inhabitants and or citizens' organisations may provide financial and other support (e.g., through commons, cooperatives, community shares, and community land trust models).

Recommendation 6. Reviewing agency strategies in bottom-up community processes

Local communities must not feel that their bottom-up demands are being used for the benefit of administrative and academic actors. It is important to promote social fabric participation processes that avoid patronising the local communities in a discursive way. It is important to build trust prior to the participation and deploy alternative participatory methods that move beyond 'tokenistic consultations'. The results and impact of these processes should be made transparent, reporting on their long and short term scope and limitations. False expectations should not be raised under any circumstances, although in many cases it is used for raising new funds.



Deep Cities-CURBATHERI project Policy Brief

Integrating values-based approaches into heritage management



Which heritage-led regeneration challenges are we facing for sustainable urban development?



The specific problems

- Fragmentation in heritage preservation facades.
- Privatization of heritage areas.
- Legal obstacles in the processes to protect tangible and intangible heritage.
- Finding effective methods for understanding complex and dynamic heritage values .
- Difficulties in recognizing stakeholder expectations.
- People are not confident about engaging with participatory processes.
- Small scale initiatives coordinated by different parties.

Recommendations

- *Recommendation 1.* Stimulate the provision of interdisciplinary training of heritage managers for a holistic approach to heritage management.
- *Recommendation 2.* Use people-centred methods to understand the complex social values associated with deep cities.
- *Recommendation 3.* Stakeholders' involvement through evaluating programmes.
- *Recommendation 4.* Collaborate within the government to regulate legislation to avoid speculation.
- *Recommendation 5.* Be supportive of community tactics for the preservation of heritage.
- *Recommendation 6.* Reviewing agency strategies in bottom-up community processes



Research Parameters

Curating Sustainable URBAAn Transformations through HERItage (CURBATHERI- DeepCities). *EU Horizon 2020 JPIC* - Conservation and Protection Call, No. 699523, 2020-2022.
<https://www.deepcities-toolbox.unifi.it/>